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contribute still further to its wants. A very heavy beginning has been made with Rome.

March 10th.

The papers announce that the troops of France and Switzerland have had some severe encounters in which those of the latter have been worsted and the French have entered Fribourg and Soluere. Report (which as yet wants confirmation and indeed is disbelieved) also says that Berne has submitted.

2. *Letters of Richard Cobden to Charles Sumner, 1862-1865.*

For the following letters the REVIEW is indebted to Hon. Edward L. Pierce, the biographer of Sumner. Extracts from some of them have been printed in Morley's *Life of Cobden*. Of the preceding letters of Cobden to Sumner, during the earliest period of the Civil War, sufficient extracts will be found either in Morley's *Cobden* or in Mr. Rhodes' *History of the United States*, Vol. III.

I.

Private.

LONDON, 11 July, 1862.

My dear Sumner

It is a long time since I wrote to you. Indeed to confess the truth it a painful task for me to keep up my correspondence with my American friends. But I have not been a less anxious observer of the events which have passed on your side. I shall now best serve the interests of humanity by telling you frankly the state and progress of opinion here. There is an all but unanimous belief that you *cannot* subject the South to the Union. Even they who are your partisans and advocates cannot see their way to any such issue. It is necessary that you should understand that this opinion is so widely and honestly entertained, because it is the key to the expression of views which might otherwise not be quite intelligible. Among some of the governing class in Europe the wish is father to this thought. But it is not so with the mass of the people. Nor is it so with our own government entirely. I *know* that Gladstone would restore your Union to-morrow if he could, and yet he has steadily maintained from the first that unless there was a strong Union sentiment it is impossible that the South can be subdued. *Now* the belief is all but universal that there is no Union feeling in the South and this is founded latterly upon the fact that no cotton comes from New Orleans. It is said that if the instincts of gain, with cotton at double its usual price, do not induce the people to sell, it is a proof beyond dispute that the political resentment is overwhelming and unconquerable.

I have precisely the same views with regard to a European intervention that I had last winter when I wrote you. The action of the govern-

ment has been put off, by two or three considerations, to the present time. It has been thought proper to wait the result of your spring campaign. Then there was a large stock of cotton in the hands of *rich* spinners and merchants and they were interested in keeping out cotton. Moreover we had great merchants who had over-specified in cotton goods which were shipped to India and China and they were glad of a rise in the raw material which enabled them to get out of their stocks. But all these motives for forbearance are now at an end. The merchants, manufacturers, spinners and operatives are all on the same footing, and they are all anxious to obtain raw cotton, and they will be all equally pressing on our government the necessity of "doing something." What that "something" is to be is more than I can pretend to say. I am of course as strongly convinced as ever that nothing but harm can possibly be done by interference of any kind. But where the welfare and the lives of millions of persons are at stake you cannot present the alternative of a greater possible evil to deter a government from attempting to remedy so vast a present danger. I feel quite convinced that unless cotton comes in considerable quantity before the end of the year the governments of Europe will be knocking at your door. I do not pretend to say what form their representation will take. I expect it will be a joint action on the part of all the governments interested, or rather a joint demonstration, for I do not believe that any violent action will be resorted to or contemplated. But you know what a moral demonstration means, with a vast material force behind it. And such a step would beyond all others encourage the South and tend to decide them against any conclusion, or compromise.

Now are you doing all you possibly can to allow the cotton to come out? I am afraid not. Your *republican party* are *mesquin* and narrow in their commercial policy. You must instruct your military commander at New Orleans to allow the sale or purchase of cotton by foreigners in the interior without asking any questions. When Mr. Thurlow Weed, who won all hearts, was here, he led us to expect that after the Spring campaign was at an end, and the ports should be in the power of the Federals, there would be a supply, and he went so far in conversation as to say that your government had no right to expect the European powers to wait indefinitely for cotton. Now depend on it the world will not wait quietly for six months longer.

Now the course you should take and the only one to avert trouble with Europe is this. To place foreigners on precisely the same footing in the interior, as respects the trade of New Orleans, as that which they occupied before the war. I mean this,—that if an Englishman comes to New Orleans, with a cargo of goods, *other than contraband of war*, and pays duty on them at the Custom house, he should be allowed to exchange those goods for cotton in the interior without any inquiry as to whether he was dealing with rebels or loyalists. And the same rule should apply if he took sovereigns to make his purchase. Unless this rule be applied, the pretended opening of the ports is a delusion. If it be said that this will enable rebels to supply their wants, all I can urge in reply is that you

will play the rebel's game far more effectually by keeping back the cotton than by allowing the South to sell it.

Let me hear your views on this subject. But pray urge your government to act as I advise. Parliament will be prorogued in a few weeks and it is during the recess that all the mischief is generally done in our foreign relations. Write to me *Midhurst, Sussex*

and believe me yours very truly

R. COBDEN.

II.

ATHENÆUM CLUB

LONDON, 13 Feby., 1863

Private

My dear Sumner.

If I have not written to you before it is not because I have been indifferent to what is passing in your midst. I may say sincerely that my thoughts have run almost as much on American as English politics. But I could do you no service, and shrunk from occupying your overtaxed attention even for a moment. My object in now writing is to speak of a matter which has a practical bearing on your affairs.

You know how much alarmed I was from the first lest our government should interpose in your affairs. The disposition of our ruling class, and the necessities of our cotton trade, pointed to some act of intervention and the indifference of the great mass of our population to your struggle, the object of which they did not foresee and understand, would have made intervention easy indeed popular if you had been a weaker naval power. This state of feeling existed up to the announcement of the President's emancipation policy. From that moment our old anti-slavery feeling began to arouse itself, and it has been gathering strength ever since. The great rush of the public to all the public meetings called on the subject shows how wide and deep the sympathy for personal freedom still is in the hearts of our people. I know nothing in my political experience so striking as a display of spontaneous public action as that of the vast gathering at Exeter Hall when without one attraction in the form of a popular orator the vast building, its minor rooms and passages and the streets adjoining were crowded with an enthusiastic audience. That meeting has had a powerful effect on our newspapers and politicians. It has closed the mouths of those who have been advocating the side of the South. And I now write to assure you that any unfriendly act on the part of our government, no matter which of our aristocratic parties is in power, towards your cause is not to be apprehended. If an attempt were made by the government in any way to commit us to the South, a spirit would be instantly aroused which would drive our government from power. This I suppose will be known and felt by the Southern agents in Europe and if communicated to their gov-

ernment must I should think operate as a great discouragement to them. For *I know* that those agents have been incessantly urging in every quarter where they could hope to influence the French and English governments the absolute necessity of *recognition* as a means of putting an end to the war. Recognition of the South, by England, whilst it bases itself on negro slavery, is an impossibility, unless indeed after the Federal government have recognized the Confederates as a nation.

So much for the influence which your emancipation policy has had on the public opinion of England. But judging from the tone of your press in America it does not seem to have gained the support of your masses. About this however I do not feel competent to offer an opinion. Nor, to confess the truth, do I feel much satisfaction in treating of your politics at all. There appears to me great mismanagement I had almost said incapacity in the management of your affairs, and you seem to be hastening towards financial and economical evils in a manner which fills me with apprehension for the future.

When I met Frémont in Paris two years ago just as you commenced this terrible war I remarked to him that the total abolition of slavery in your northern Continent was the only issue which could justify the war to the civilized world. Every symptom seems to point to this result. But at what a price is the negro to be emancipated! I confess that if then I had been the arbiter of his fate I should have refused him freedom at the cost of so much white men's blood and women's tears. I do not however blame the North. The South fired the first shot, and on them righteously falls the malediction that "they who take the sword shall perish by the sword." And it seems unlikely that after all the much despised "nigger," and not the potentates and statesmen of Europe will be the final arbitrator in the great struggle.

Let me have a line from you when your Senatorial duties have ceased on the 4th, and afford you a little leisure.

Believe me,

Yours very truly

R. COBDEN.

III.

ATHENÆUM CLUB, LONDON

2 April, 1863.

private

My dear Sumner

On receipt of your letter I communicated privately with Lord Russell, urging him to be more than passive in enforcing the law respecting the building of ships for the Confederate government. I especially referred to the circumstance that it was suspected that some ships pretended to be for the Chinese government were really designed for that of Richmond, and I urged him to furnish Mr. Adams with the names of all the ships building for China and full particulars where they were being built. This Lord Russell tells me he had already done, and

he seems to promise fairly. Our government are perfectly well informed of all that is being done for the Chinese.

Now there are certain things which can be done and others which cannot be done by our government. We are bound to do our best to prevent any ship of war being built for the Confederate government, for a ship of war can only be used or owned legitimately by a government. But with munitions of war the case is different. They are bought and sold by private merchants for the whole world, and it is not in the power of governments to prevent it. Besides your own government have laid down repeatedly the doctrine that it is no part of the duty of governments to interfere with such transactions for which they are not in any way responsible. I was therefore very sorry that Mr. Adams had persisted in raising an objection to these transactions in which by the way the North has been quite as much involved as the South. If you have read the debate in the House on the occasion when Mr. Forster brought up the subject last week, you will see how Sir Roundell Palmer, the Solicitor General, and Mr. Laird the shipbuilder availed themselves of this opening to divert attention from the real question at issue—the building of war-ships to the question of selling munitions of war—in which latter practice it was shown you in the North were the great participants.

You must really keep the public mind right in America on this subject. Do not let it be supposed that you have any grievance against us for selling munitions of war. Confine the question to the building of ships in which I hope we shall bring up a strong feeling on the right side here.

I remain truly yours,

R. COBDEN.

IV.

LONDON 2 May, 1863.

Private

My dear Sumner

Though I have no news beyond what you will get from the public channels, yet I think it well to write a few lines on the present aspect of affairs.

I am in no fear whatever of any rupture between the two countries arising out of the blockade or the incendiary language of the politicians or the press on both sides of the Atlantic, though these may help to precipitate matters on another issue. But the fitting out of privateers to prey on your commerce and to render useless your mercantile tonnage is another and more serious matter. Great material interests are at stake, and unless this evil can be put down the most serious results may follow. Now I have reason to know that our government fully appreciates the gravity of this matter. Lord Russell whatever may be the tone of his ill mannered despatches, is sincerely alive to the necessity of putting an end to the equipping of ships of war in our harbors to be used against the Federal government by Confederates. He was *bona fide* in his aim

to prevent the Alabama from leaving, but he was tricked and was angry at the escape of that vessel. It is necessary your government should know all this and I hope public opinion in England will be so alive to the necessity of enforcing the law that there will be no more difficulty in the matter.

If Lord Russell's despatches to Mr. Adams are not very civil he may console himself with the knowledge that the Confederates are still worse treated. You will be amused at one of the intercepted despatches from Mr. Benjamin to Mr. Mason in which the former lectures Lord Russell on his bad manners. This despatch has been presented to Parliament. By the way in Harriet Martineau's "30 Years Peace," the continuation of the Pictorial History of England, she gives an anecdote of a conversation which an English traveller (known to be herself) had with Mr. Webster when the latter complained of the want of manners on the part of the Whig diplomatists which gave an advantage to the Tories over their political rivals in their relations with Foreign Countries. Hoping you are well

I remain very truly yours

R. COBDEN.

v.

MIDHURST, 22 May, 1863.

Private

My dear Sumner.

I called on Lord Russell and read every word of your last long indictments against him and Lord Palmerston, to him. He was a little impatient under the treatment, but I got through every word. I did my best to improve on the text in half-an-hour's conversation.

Public opinion is recovering its senses. John Bull you know has never before been a neutral when great naval operations have been carried on, and he does not take kindly to the task. But he is becoming gradually reconciled. He also *now* begins to understand that he has acted illegally in applauding those who furnished ships of war to prey on your commerce. *It will not be repeated.* I cannot too often deplore the bungling mismanagement on your side which allowed the two distinct questions of selling munitions of war, and the equipping of privateers to be mixed up together. It has confused the thick wits of our people, and made it difficult for those who were right on this side on the Foreign Enlistment Act to make the public understand the difference between what was and what was not a legal transaction. In fact your Foreign Office played into the hands of our politicians by affording them the means of mystification. If a plain, simple, short and dignified reclamation had been at first made against the fitting out of ships of war, with clear statement of the law, and a brief recital of what your government had done under similar circumstances, to us, it would have been impossible for our government to have resisted it. But when you opened fire on us for not stopping the export of arms and munitions of war, you offered an

easy victory to our lawyers, and gave them an opportunity of escaping in a cloud of dust from the real question at issue.

Mr. Evarts is "the right man in the right place." He is an able international lawyer. Quite a match for any one here in his own special walk. His manners are quiet and impressive. He is mixing very much in our best society and I hear him spoken of with great respect. He seems pleased with his reception.

I have received the volumes you were so good as to send me. The Congressional Globe interests me much. It gives a clear view of your mode of debate. You don't allow cheers, or "oh, oh," or general expressions of assent or opposition. But you allow interruptions, which we do not tolerate, in the way of questions, or interpolated remarks. I confess I like our manner the best. I am much obliged by the valuable volume on your census.

I am always glad to hear from you. Believe me

Yours very truly

R. COBDEN.

VI.

MIDHURST, SUSSEX, 7 Aug., 1863.

My Dear Sumner.

In the first place let me thank you for your kindness in forwarding me the "Congressional Globe," and other public documents which have been of very great use to me for reference, and without which I could not have kept myself *au courant* with your politics.

Next, let me congratulate you on the improved state of your prospects. So far as fighting goes, I think you have now little to fear from the Confederates. The danger is from the *politicians*. There are so many in the North hankering after the "flesh-pots of Egypt", that I shall not be surprised at an attempt to compromise with the South, and to take them back "institution" and all! Though I would not have begun the war for the emancipation of negroes, and though I cannot urge its continuance for that object, yet I have always felt that the only result which could justify the war was the manumission of every slave on the Northern Continent of America. To restore the old Union, slavery and all, will be to cover with shame the partisans of the North throughout the world, and justify the opponents of the war everywhere. It would leave the question still to be settled by a similar process of blood by another generation. However, I do not see how this compromise can be accomplished.

You will have had reason to feel but little satisfied with us during the late session. Had our government and parliament taken an enlightened view of the interests of the nation they would have competed with each other in their eagerness to amend our foreign enlistment act, in order to preserve intact so far as depended on us the neutrality code in which we above all nations are so deeply interested. I consider the whole system at an end. Nothing but the experiences of war in which we are bel-

ligerents and you are neutrals will open our eyes to a sense of the new situation in which we shall find ourselves.

Though we have given you such good ground of complaint on account of the Cruisers which have left our ports, yet you must not forget that we have been the only obstacle to what would have been almost a European recognition of the South. Had England joined France they would have been followed by probably every other State of Europe, with the exception of Russia. This is what the Confederate agents have been seeking to accomplish. They have pressed recognition on England and France with persistent energy from the first. I confess that their eagerness for European intervention in some shape has always given me a strong suspicion of their conscious weakness. But considering how much more we have suffered than other people from the blockade, this abstinence on our part from all diplomatic interference is certainly something to our credit, and this I attribute entirely to the honorable attitude assumed by our working population.

You will have observed the great prominence given of late to the Polish question. I do not believe it possible to involve England in a war with Russia for Poland. Nobody here believes in the capacity of the Poles for self-government. They are good fighters, and not very scrupulous as to what flag they fight under, but they are bad citizens. In France, however, there is a strong feeling in their favor by the Army, and the Church—the former from old associations on many a battlefield; the latter from identity of faith. And if Russia were less inaccessible to the French there would probably be an armed intervention. But it is difficult to see how the war is to be carried on if Germany persists in maintaining her neutrality. When you have a leisure ten minutes let me hear from you

and believe me Yours very truly

RIC. COBDEN.

VII.

MIDHURST, 8 Oct. 1863.

Private

My dear Sumner

The admiration which I felt for the masterly ability of your speech at the Cooper Institute cannot suppress a certain amount of resistance to it on the score of *policy*. I was I confess rather beset with the feeling of *cui bono?* after reading your powerful indictments against England and France, *together*. It should have been your policy to have kept them asunder. Besides if all we hear be true we are not so bad as our great neighbour. We have done very uncivil things, but never has our Executive been prepared to take part with the French in recognizing the South, or in planting a thorn in your side in Mexico. Again was it politic to array us in hostile attitudes just at the moment when the hopes of the South were mainly founded on the prospect of a rupture between yourselves and Europe? Instead of bringing an indictment jointly

against France and England for their past misdeeds, would it not have been better to have shown in the most favorable colors consistent with truth, the strength of the alliance between the masses in England, led by so much of the intellect and the moral and religious worth of the kingdom, and the Federals, and to have demonstrated the impossibility of the aristocracy, with all their hostility, drawing us into a war with each other. You were I suspect speaking under the impression that the iron-clad rams would be allowed to leave. I was sure, as I told Evarts and Forbes again and again, that those vessels would not be allowed to sail. The fact that they were armoured, turreted, and *beaked*, constituted them armed vessels even under the most lax interpretation of our Enlistment Act.

Your career seems to be again checkered with partial reverses. I suppose this will tend more than ever to draw the Federal authorities towards the employment of the African race in the war. For my part I have always thought that the negroes who are the main cause and object of the war will play an important part in its final operations. In India the Sepoys have always done the chief part in our territorial conquests, although they are a very inferior race physically to the negroes. Whoever heard of a Hindoo offering to fight a picked Englishman in the prize ring? He would hardly have a better chance than a woman. But we have had black men doing this in England. Tom Cribb had to fight a severe battle for the champions belt with the negro Molyneux. If this horrible war for the freedom of the slaves is to go on, I think in the interests of the negroes themselves all over the world it is to be desired that the black man should be found fighting his own battle. To this you will be brought probably against the wish of a majority of the Federals. Don't be tempted to enter on any defense of your course in answer to my bill of exceptions. You can be better employed than in a controversy with me.

Believe me

Yours very truly

R. COBDEN.

VIII.

MIDHURST, 18 Aug., 1864.

My dear Sumner:

It is long since we exchanged a letter. I do not know whether I am your debtor in our epistolary ledger. But I at all events have to thank you for the printed papers you have from time to time forwarded me and which I have read with much interest, and heartily congratulate you on every step you have gained in your struggle for human rights and freedom. Whatever may be the fate of the war *your* triumph will be a permanent gain for humanity.

Along with your partisans generally in this country, I am looking with deep and constant solicitude to the progress of your terrible struggle. There is however a constant struggle in my own breast against my paramount abhorrence of war as a means of settling disputes whether between nations or citizens of one country. If it were not for the interest I felt

in the fate of the slaves, and the hardly inferior interest in the removal of that stigma of slavery from your character as a free Christian community, I should turn with horror from the details of your battles, and wish only for peace on any terms. As it is I cannot help asking myself—whether it can be within the designs of a merciful God that even a good work should be accomplished at the cost of so much evil to the world. I have been much disappointed with the result so far of the Virginia campaign. I suppose it has been inevitable. But we were told by those who ought to have been well informed that you were approaching Richmond with three armies any one of which was able to cope with the rebels. Now however we see two of these armies disappear from the scene, and the third held in check by a portion of Lee's army whilst he sends part of his forces to menace you within your own territory and even to threaten your capital. All this of course tends to confirm nine-tenths of our politicians here in their belief that the success of the North is impossible. For my own part having never considered that the issue depended on fighting but on the sapping and mining of the social evil of the South I still look forward with unabated confidence to the triumph of the North.

But I begin to speculate on the effects which the failure of Grant's campaign may have on your politics. Sometimes I speculate on the possibility of your imitating the course which political parties often follow here, and that your Democrats who *appear* to be for peace may come into power and carry out even more successfully than *your* party could do the policy of war and abolition of slavery:—Like Peel in his course on Free trade and Catholic emancipation they would have the advantage of being sure of the support of the honest advocates of the policy they adopted even although they were nominally in the ranks of their political opponents. What I most dread is your falling into political confusion in the North. That would be a severe blow to the principle of self-government everywhere.

I must not omit to mention that my friend Mr. Goldwin Smith, Professor of Modern History at Oxford, goes out by the Europa for a visit to the States. He needs no personal introductions and I have given him no letters. But I need not tell you that he deserves well of your country. He is one of the few men moving in his sphere who has given a hearty and most brilliant support to your cause.

A relative of mine, Colonel Cole of the 15th Regt. stationed in New Brunswick, and who lately filled temporarily the post of Governor of that Province, will make a short tour in the States, and will present you with my card of introduction. I shall be obliged if you will give him any introductions you can to the military authorities so as to insure him all possible facilities for seeing your army in the field.

Mr. Scovel who paid me a visit here in the winter is I believe a Senator of the New Jersey Legislature but I do not know his address. Would you oblige me by posting the enclosed to him.

With my best wishes always

believe me

Yours very truly

RICHARD COBDEN.

IX.

MIDHURST, 11 Jan., 1865.

My Dear Sumner

I have not only to acknowledge your last letter to me but also many printed papers which you have from time to time been so good as [to] forward me.

I agree with a remark in the concluding passage of your last letter that you are fighting the battle of liberalism in Europe as well as the battle of freedom in America. It is only necessary to observe who are your friends and who your opponents in the old world to be satisfied that great principles are at stake in your terrible conflict. But it is not by victories in the field alone that you will help the cause of the masses in Europe. End where it may, the Civil war will, in the eyes of mankind, have conferred quite as much "glory", so far as mere fighting goes, on the South as on the North. It is in your superiority in other things that you can alone by your example elevate the old world. I confess I am very jealous of your taking a course which seems to hold up *our* old doings as an excuse for your present shortcomings. Hence I was sorry to see your republication of the old indictment against us in your very able and learned pamphlet. My answer is that your only title to existence as a Republic is that you are supposed to be superior to what we were 60 years ago. Had you returned the Florida to Bahia without a moment's delay, cashiered the Captain of the Wachusetts, and offered to pay for the support of the survivors who were dependent on those who were killed or drowned in that wicked outrage, your friends would have felt some inches taller here. *That* would have been the true answer to the taunt of our Tory press, and not the disinterment of the misdeeds of our Tory government to show that they did something almost as bad as the Federal commander.

You see I am taking the liberty of ancient friendship with you; and whilst in the vein let me ask what is the meaning of the Bobadil strain in which the New York Times treats the Canadian question? We are accustomed to disregard the Herald as an Ishmaelite organ which represented no political party, and whose proprietor was a renegade Scotchman. But the "Times", with Mr. Raymond at its head, was supposed to be something different. I confess however I never saw anything from Mr. Gordon Bennett's paper more calculated to weaken your good influence over this country than the article to which I refer. Are we henceforth to have two New York Heralds instead of one? But enough of this vein.

I observe an attempt by the Times (London) correspondent at New York to make it appear that the American public are again beginning to apprehend European intervention in some form. I do not believe there is the remotest risk of any thing of the kind. You will I hope have soon got possession of all the ports of entry in the South and re-established your custom houses; when that is done I do not see how a collision or misunderstanding with a neutral maritime power can possibly arise.

I was much pleased with your speech on the Canadian difficulty in

the Senate where you spoke of avoiding all quarrels with other countries, and devoting yourself to the one sole object of putting down the rebellion. I am not blind to the fact that very grave questions will stand over for adjustment between your country and ours. Some of them, such as the injury done to your whole shipping interest, by the losses and destruction of a part, can hardly be settled by governments. They will I fear invite future retaliation on our shipping by citizens of your country, if *we* should ever go to war. But all these questions must be postponed till your war is ended, and then probably the whole world may be ready for a thorough revolution in international maritime law. It will be for you to show the way.

I wish I could see more intelligence in your midst on questions of finance and political economy. Your Congress seems to me just about on a level with the British parliament of 1818 before Huskisson commenced his first reforms of our fiscal system which were afterwards followed up by Peel and Gladstone. I have always considered it a great misfortune that the New Englanders who have been the schoolmasters of the Union, should have thought themselves interested in the policy of "Protection." They have spread the heresy over the land. However, I have great faith in the intelligence of your people, *after they shall have been in the school of adversity.*

I observe that your Secretary of the Navy calls for government yards. As a rule all heads of departments wish to become manufacturers. In this country they have contrived to inveigle us into all kinds of undertakings, and it has been found very unprofitable. We are now trying to make our government resort to private enterprise for the supply of their wants. But it is very difficult to retrace our steps. I send you a couple of copies of a speech I made on this subject last year. Pray put them into the hands of parties taking an interest in the subject.

You were so good as [to] send me the Congressional Globe, bound to March, 1863. If you would forward me the continuation I shall be obliged. Send me also copies of your Diplomatic Correspondence for last year and your departmental Reports on Navy, Finance, etc.

We find it almost as necessary to be "posted" in your "bluebooks" as our own. I hope this will find you well. Believe me

Yours very truly

RIC. COBDEN.

Hon. Charles Sumner
U. S. Senator.

It seems as though the rebels when driven to desperation would emancipate their slaves, and make *that* the ground of an appeal to Europe for recognition. I hope you will anticipate them by a 2/3rd vote of Congress for altering the Constitution.

X.

MIDHURST, 2 March, 1865.

My Dear Sumner

I feel it a pleasant duty to give you my best congratulations on the recent proceedings within and without your Halls of Congress. The vote on the amendment of the constitution was a memorable and glorious event in your history. Another incident, that of your introduction of a colored man to the Supreme Court was hardly less interesting. In all these proceedings at Washington you ought to be allowed to indulge the feelings of a triumphant general. You served as a volunteer in the forlorn hope when the battle of emancipation seemed a hopeless struggle. *Your* position within the walls of Congress was very different from that of the agitators out of doors—meritorious as were their labors. I have served in both capacities, and know the difference between addressing an audience of partisans at a public meeting and a hostile parliamentary assembly. The rapid progress of events and the sudden transformation of opinion must impart a constant excitement to your life;—it must be something like the movements of a kaleidoscope. I heartily congratulate you and wish I could shake hands and have a chat with you on all that is passing. Looking on from this distance, I cannot doubt that your *great* military operations are drawing to a close. The war is being driven into a corner. A few months must decide the fate of the armies in the field. If Lee is beaten I see no other great army, and the Southern people are too intelligent to attempt to protract the struggle into a guerilla warfare. But it is useless to offer speculations here on events which will be realized probably ere you receive this.

I observe an attempt to alarm you with the prospect of European intervention. I need not tell you that this is the purest fiction. Nothing of the kind is now possible. You know that at first I was very apprehensive. And you know also that from the first the French government has been courting the alliance of England in a scheme of intervention. “Barkis is willing” has been the constant language of Napoleon to Madame Britannia. It is nothing but your great *power* that has kept the hands of Europe off you. When the deputation of Free traders applied to the Minister Guizot in 1846 for authorization to hold meetings to agitate for free trade they received permission with the benediction—“Soyez fort, et nous vous protegerons.” This is about an amount of what your friends in Europe have been able to do for you. There is no denying the fact that your terrible struggle has demonstrated an amount of hostility on the part of the ruling class here, and the ruling powers of Europe generally toward your democratic institutions, for which none of us were prepared. Still it must not be forgotten that the common people of England were true to the cause of freedom. It has never been possible to call a public open meeting, *with notice*, to pass a resolution in favor of the rebellion. It would have been voted down by the working men. I know you are greatly and justly angered at the conduct of our upper classes—but do not forget the attitude of the workers.

I have to thank you for sending me the Congressional Globe and other public documents. I send a few copies of my speech on manufacturing government Establishments. Please to put them into the hands of any who take an interest in such matters. Attempts will be made to induce you to set up great government works. But you had far better rely on private enterprise.

If there be anything arising between the two governments of which I am not likely to be fully informed, I shall be obliged by your confidentially informing me. Is there any other reason besides ill health for Lord Lyons' resignation?

Believe me Yours truly,
R. COBDEN.

Hon. Charles Sumner.

P. S. I am more alarmed at the politico-economical delusions that prevail in your high places than at the arms of the rebels. Who is Mr. "Maximum" Stephens who thinks he can control the price of gold if he can only induce a majority of Congress to agree with him? The serious part of it is that he has so large a following.

You have a most serious task before you when the war ends, in clearing away the wreck and adjusting your pecuniary, political, and social difficulties. The country is revelling in a Saturnalia of greenbacks and government expenditure, and is under a delusion that it is a genuine prosperity. It is destined to a rude disenchantment, and this will test the statesmanship of the republican party.